Import of edible oil

†1664. SHRI KHAN GHUFRAN ZAHIDI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to promote import of edible oils; and

(b) if so, the quantity of edible oils imported during the year 2001-2002 and the estimated expenditure incurred thereon in foreign exchange?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) and (b) The production of edible oil seeds & hence of edible oils in the country is not adequate to meet the domestic consumption demand. Therefore, import of edible oils (except copra/coconut oil) is under Open General License (OGL). During the year 2001-2002 (April-March) 42.14 lakh MTs of edible oils have been imported at an estimated value of Rs. 6474.47 crores, as per the statistical data of the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics, Kolkata.

Offtake of foodgrains by States

1665. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is no offtake of foodgrains by the States due to high Central issue prices;

(b) whether Government would consider to reduce issue price;

(c) whether it is a fact that various claims of Gujarat Government are pending since long for decision at High Power Committee; and

(d) if so, by when the meeting would be covened to settle the claim?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) No, Sir. The offtake of wheat and rice from the Central Pool during the year 2001-2002 increased to a record level of 312.68 lakh tonnes, as against 179.46 lakh tonnes during the preceding financial year. This increase of 133.21 lakh tonnes, works out to an increase of 74% and is the highest ever in both absolute as well as percentage terms. Even during the current financial year, there is an upward trend of offtake.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.